

CLAIMS

1. A method for reducing acid components of roasted coffee beans, comprising contacting said roasted coffee beans with flowing steam, for a time sufficient to reduce acid component of said roasted coffee beans.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said roasted coffee beans are placed in an apparatus which has a steam supply passage and a steam exhaust passage, said method further comprising flowing steam from said steam supply passage to said steam exhaust passage, under conditions whereby steam exiting said steam exhaust passage has an outlet pressure higher than atmosphere pressure.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said roasted coffee beans comprise whole coffee beans.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein said roasted coffee beans comprise whole coffee beans.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said roasted coffee beans comprise ground roasted coffee beans capable of passing through a mesh with an aperture of 1.7 mm, wherein said ground roasted coffee beans are present in an amount of up to 70% of said roasted coffee beans.
6. The method of claim 2, wherein said roasted coffee beans comprise ground roasted coffee beans capable of passing through a mesh with an aperture of 1.7 mm, wherein said ground roasted coffee beans are present in an amount of up to 70% of said roasted coffee beans.
7. The method of claim 1, comprising using an amount of steam weighing at least 10% of the weight of said roasted coffee beans.
8. The method of claim 2, comprising using an amount of steam weighing at least 10% of the weight of said roasted coffee beans.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein said steam is water saturated steam.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein said steam is water saturated steam.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein said steam is at a temperature of from 100 to 230°C.
12. Steam treated, roasted coffee beans produced by the method of claim 1, having an extraction ratio of at least 35%, and a total amount of formic acid and acetic acid less than 0.25% of the weight of said roasted coffee beans.
13. Steam treated, roasted coffee beans produced by the method of claim 2, having an extraction ratio of at least 35%, and a total amount of formic acid and acetic acid less than 0.25% of the weight of said roasted coffee beans.